

Golden Girl

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"I could be beautiful. The best iron can be is useful. Gold is beautiful." A brief sojourn into the psyche of Harime Nui serves only to horrify. M for mostly ideological sensitivity, though could be considered semi-explicit.

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I wrote this because I don't understand Nui... at all. Her disgusting fawning, her pseudo-sadism... none of it. If she seems OOC in this it's because, well, I don't understand her! *shrugs* enjoy!

You all piss me off. "Oh," you whine, "Poor Satsuki! Poor thing. Growing up all alone with Lady Ragyō. Suffering in silence like the brave, brave creature she is." Yes, I see you. I see you as easily as I see the letters, the panels, the fourth wall. You can't escape me. I see you, and you make me sick.

Let me set your heads on straight. Satsuki didn't grow up alone. She had me. She had me and everything I wanted. That bitch. She never could appreciate what she had. Not love, no, but something better - undivided attention.

I never understood what pleasure mother got from looking into those dead, icy eyes, reaching into a mind that was so clearly far away. Satsuki thinks herself clever. She thinks herself an actress, an artist. Disgusting. It's so obvious how much she hates it. Therein lies her charm, I suppose.

Oh, mother, wouldn't you so much rather look into soft, warm eyes that adore you?

Ah, I'm such a hypocrite. I'm no better an actress than Satsuki. I've known since the start - how many years ago? Ten? - what mother wants. She is a particular kind of craftsman, like the blacksmith who would rather beat relentlessly against hard black iron than even think about turning his tools to the soft mellowness of gold.

My lady is concerned only with breaking the unbreakable, with reshaping the metal that broke the mold.

But I am nothing like that. I am whimsical and soft, compliant. I am gold. I want nothing other than her attentions. I embrace them, long for them. They make me beautiful. I could be beautiful. The best iron can be is useful. Gold is beautiful.

I tried to be like iron, like big sister. To go all cold and stiff. I tried to conjure up pain to shine through my eyes to beg stoically for unattainable mercy. I thought I was a veritable puritan, but I too am an awful actress. Mother could only be amused with me for a short while, frowning in boredom and finally turning away. She let me join her in her game, an honor in itself, I suppose. She let me play with Satsuki, do things to her, but all I wanted was to have them done to me.

So instead I carefully watched and perfected my art, learned to mimic down to the last detail the straining of her subdued trembling of unabashed loathing as mother and I caressed her bare skin. I learned her every effort of the mind against the body, every clenched fist and bitten tongue. I remember with particular fondness the split second before her breaking point, the tense ecstatic bridge into insanity as the body takes the mind by storm and descends into spastic, futile struggle. So many lessons my big sister taught me.

But still I am a fake, a mockingbird. Mocking the art of the blacksmith, of the one who joys in tirelessly beating at the anvil. I am not iron. I am gold. I will never be iron. Lady Ragyō sees right through me. She knows I am hers and so will never reach for me, though it is all that I yearn for. My mother is cruel, but you already knew that, didn't you?

I remember with great distinctness the day I set aside my nature to become a tool. We had her stretched out on the bed (I would have done anything to take her place), her head on my belly as I locked her arms down with my folded knees. I absently gripped her hair as she stared into some realm of platonic forms with dry eyes, her lip turned into a tiny sneer as mother gently beat at the steel that is Satsuki. I hated those cold eyes. I didn't want to turn them to liquid as mother did. I wanted to shatter them.

And so, as rage at years of deprivation filled me, without asking for permission, I raised a fist, and, with an animal scream, sank it into my step-sister's belly. I watched carefully as her eyes dilated and she threw up blood and bile all over her chest and stomach as she writhed in my grip. I was too busy enjoying the fruits of my jealous revenge to notice Mother's hungry eyes turned to me for the first time. In the blink of an eye, her lips were upon mine, and my heart nearly exploded. For a few moments, the ice queen was forgotten. For once, I was the center of attention.

So I decided to become a tool, an instrument in the hand of the smith. I could never have what I really wanted, but I may as well be useful. It wasn't bad, and I started to enjoy it. Who wouldn't gladly take the opportunity to torment the object of their jealousy, especially if it earned them the affections of their love? I quickly shifted into the *modus operandus* of the continually annoying, basking in mother's deflected pleasure as I took every opportunity to harass my sister.

Until one day, it all solidified into something too real for my taste.

I met her in the hallway, and though I hadn't been planning to see her, I fully intended to pull her hair and cheeks until I got bored. Suddenly, however, she turned her radiance and those dead eyes upon me, stopping me in my tracks. Something in her stance, her steady gaze, made me nervous. I shook my head, convincing myself that her resemblance to mother made me fear her anger, and skipped to stand unbearably close to her as she looked down from her imposing height.

"Nui," she intoned flatly, her deep voice purring in her chest. I purred back at her, reaching up to tug her ear. She pushed me back, the rumble turning to a growl. "What do you want?"

I sighed as annoyingly as I could, making my voice gratingly high-pitched.

"Do I have to want something to be with my big sister?" She laughed with what I thought was undue acidity.

"But you do want something, don't you?" her mirthless grin stretched from ear to ear. "You want what I have." Hearing her say it, seeing my own transparency through her eyes, made my heart freeze. Still grinning coldly, she condescendingly bent her knees and braced her hands against her thighs so that we were face to face.

"You're..."

"Don't! Stop!"

"Jealous." The last syllable slipped out in a sharp hiss, and it was that last word that broke my heart. I wasn't just jealous of the attentions mother paid her, I was jealous of *her*. Not of what she had, but what she was. The continual beating against the anvil had not, as intended, turned her into a twisted piece of tortured metal, good only for scrap. She had, through her own will, turned herself into something with more worth than I could imagine. Her strength of will and passion kept her warm at night; I had only my untamed desires that left me cold, pathetic, and cracked.

A hysterical giggle escaped my lips. The reality struck me harder than any blow I had ever known. She was a sleek and perfectly crafted sword; I was a useless golden tool. My rage and hate bubbled over and I raised a fist to beat her, punish her for being better than me. Before I could bring it down, however, bakuzan, the perfect representation of her essence, the secret sword, sang as it was released from its sheath and snipped off a lock of my hair. Golden, it fluttered to the ground, resting in sharp contrast against the burgundy carpet.

I stumbled back. Not out of fear, for my physical strength was massively superior to hers, but out of despair. With a clack of heels and a swish of hair, she stepped past me, unconcerned.

"Fuck you!" I screamed out after her, my voice cracking.

"Nothing I haven't done before, Harime Nui." she boomed before she turned a corner and disappeared.

And I did. I fucked her and I beat her, but nothing could erase the clarity of the truth I had seen. My hatred stewed into a ridiculous, hysterical mirth with the cold mercilessness of life, and to this day I can't help but giggle at the absurdity of others' ambitions.

The world is cruel, for it endows but one inescapable nature to each. I will always be my mother's adorer, her golden girl. I will always chase my whims with meaningless unabashedness. I will never get what I want, though I do what I want and no one can stop me.

And I will always laugh, for I am the useless frivolity that is gold.

I am useless.

I am gold.

Damn artsiness! *shakes fist* *grumbles* extended metaphors...